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Item 3 (b) (ii) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities

Statement submitted by Elizabeth Seton Federation, International Association of Charities and Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2004/1.

04-21319 (E) 290104

Introduction: "Focus on the Disabled: Challenges, Perspectives, Priorities and Opportunities"

An integral part of the mandate of Social Development is the "silent sector" — those who often do not, or cannot, speak for themselves — the disabled. Frequently overlooked, shunned, ignored or discriminated against, disabled people are deserving of the world's fair-minded attention and the same access to human rights and dignity that everyone else is accorded. The building of a better climate of existence in all areas is a mandate of non-governmental organizations, who are in a key position to bring together the public sector, governments, business interests and individual donors to form a partnership on behalf of the handicapped.

Facts to face:

- Tens of millions have disabilities that affect their minds and bodies, ranging in intensity from arrested childhood development and poor learning abilities to chronic illness, speech and hearing impairment, to blindness and the inability to walk.

- Close to 70 of the disabled in the United States are unemployed, further adding to their sense of worthlessness in the human plan.

- A quarter-million Americans are victims of multiple sclerosis (MS), a progressive, intermitting disease with no cure.

- HIV/AIDS patients now number around 40 million globally.

- Countless numbers of babies are born annually with birth defects, often to drug-addicted mothers. Thousands more are born each year to mothers without pre-natal care, further compromising the infants' health and making it prone to malaria, tuberculosis and other life-threatening diseases.

- Over 70 of aging Americans have some form of disability, with 39 requiring assistance in daily living.

- According to a Japanese senator who is herself wheelchair bound, there are 400 million disabled people in the Asia-Pacific region, of whom 160 million are suffering from severe poverty.

Challenges:

- Identify the disabled, often a difficult task since in many places they still hide behind closed doors, many times at their own wish, unwilling to face yet another experience of public pity, shunning, or feelings of inadequacy.

- Determine the degree of disability; introduce methodology to help overcome their fears and ensure their integration into society via medical and psychological care, education and skills development, and monitoring their progress.

- Strengthen local community, government and support systems.

- Create handicapped-friendly workplace environments and recreational facilities.

- Strategize to reduce barriers that limited the handicapped, expressed by ignorance, injustice and even involuntary exclusion.

- While public awareness of the plight of the disabled has progressed tremendously in the past two decades, there is still a long way to go to insure their acceptance as viable members of society. Strategizing on how to accomplish this goal is a major priority. Involving the media in specific instances may be productive.

Perspectives:

- Focus on current causes of people's disabilities and make a concentrated effort to minimize their disastrous effects: landmines, catastrophic industrial accidents; various forms of abuse; germ-based occurrences; birth defects; untreated early-life diseases; occupational hazards; the use of illegal weapons; domestic accidents; and more.

- Realize that the disabled have a comer on vulnerability, with little or no mobility, limited access to services, difficulty in transportation, discrimination or patronizing attitudes in the job market, all of which serve to lessen their hopes of rehabilitation.

- Develop an awareness of the problems of the disabled by transferring the focus from their handicaps to their assets and abilities, to add to the quality of life around them. (And often, to the economy.)

Priorities:

- Make available to the handicapped the assurance of their right to human security and dignity as proclaimed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his opening-day address to the 56th Annual DPVNGO Conference in New York.

- Encourage tolerance and a spirit of welcome by providing access to education, special job- training skills, information on new developments in medical technology, therapies and industrial workshops. Involve families, advocates, caregivers, institutions and the public sector as well as the patients themselves in this "sharing" experience. Coordinated partnerships like these can do much to enhance the opportunities for returning to a sense of normalcy for disabled persons. Monitoring these efforts should be a high priority with top- level supervision and contact with the disabled, instead of relegating these duties to the newest low-level person in the system who may have the best of intentions but little experience or expertise in working with the handicapped.

- Develop viable employment initiatives to return the disabled to the work force in some of the many areas where their efforts and talents have proven successful: computer technology, writing, art, musical performance, composition or direction, teaching, science, and more, so that they may become self-sufficient and acquire a sense of self-worth.

- Involve civic-minded institutions and generous benefactors in a campaign to support the basic requirements of the disabled with attainable goals by assisting governments and the private sector in providing curb-cuts, ramps, lifts, to facilitate entrance to buildings, banks, healthcare providers, offices and other public places.

- Encourage support of the UN Commission on Human Rights and work to strengthen its effectiveness.

- Be mindful of the differences location makes — what is a life-saving necessity for a disabled person in a least-developed country may be just an extra perquisite for a similarly- affected person in a major metropolis.

- Support the enactment of laws that protect the welfare and well-being of persons afflicted with disabilities, and monitor their implementation, and their affect on the disabled within our own areas.

- Cultivate a culture of caring concern for the disabled. Try to anticipate their needs, unobtrusively. Consider them valued friends, not objects of pity. Acknowledge their talents as well as their needs. It's not just an act of kindness — it's a human obligation.

Opportunities:

- Take advantage of the disabled persons' own abilities and involve them in planning the proposed improvements in their lifestyle. Bring their knowledge and ideas together with those of the other members of the partnership — governments, healthcare providers, family members, financial benefactors and others for the best possible results.

- Promote the concept of a sympathetic, credible profile of the disabled and the advantages of assimilating them into the life of the community.

- Arrange local events, workshops, panel discussions and seminars featuring the "disabled but able", highlighting their successes and providing examples of how they worked to overcome their problems and disadvantages, with the help of society and their own sheer determination.

- Establish "twinning" plans with other similarly-situated groups to share experiences, strategies and efforts, either on a local, or far-ranging level.

- In business, suggest creating a recognition plan for rewarding employers who hire the handicapped, and bring media attention to the success of the plan and the people involved.

- Consider the possibility of an annual special sports event just for the handicapped, involving important sports figures as role models for the young athletes. Apprise the media of the plans well in advance. An accomplishment won here will go a long way to build self- confidence and plant the seeds of empowerment in a young handicapped person who has years ahead to cope with his or her disability.

Finally —

Welcome the disabled into the mainstream of life just as enthusiastically as you would any new friend. Be as helpful as you can. Offer information. Answer questions. Try to anticipate their immediate needs. Develop a sensitivity to them, and realize that a situation that may be perfectly normal to most people may very well present an almost- insurmountable problem to them. (And that they may not want to talk about it.) Help them to keep apprised of the newest developments in legislation, medicine, therapies and everyday situations that may smooth their already-difficult way in the world. But most of all, help them to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth that is their human right.

Recommendation:

For the public sector to function more effectively, it is essential that it reaffirm and strengthen its commitment to the partnership process by which the disabled may achieve their goal —the hope of a better future.

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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: improving public-sector effectiveness

Statement submitted by Pax Romana, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2004/1.

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1. One of the most important elements in public sector effectiveness is an effective educational system which includes higher education. Many international agreements including the World Declaration on Higher Education emphasize the important role of higher education:

"Higher education has acquired an unprecedented role in the present-day society, as a vital component of cultural, social, economic and political development and as a pillar of endogenous capacity-building, the consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace in a context of justice."[i]

The Dakar Framework for Action recognizes the important contribution of education to society as a whole:

"Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalization."[ii]

2. Strengthening and supporting the public sector's emphasis on higher education bears fruit far beyond the educational system. Institutes of higher education serve as centers of knowledge and research for the community and state providing new information on science and medicine that can benefit other public sector areas. We acknowledge the benefits from partnerships between public universities and the private sector. However, we urge that these partnerships not claim the rights to the results, but rather share them with the general public.

3. Students also play an important role in social development. Many students intern or volunteer their time with NGOs and state agencies in the public sector. Students should be empowered with more opportunities to help make the public sector more effective.

4. In recent years, we have been deeply concerned with the changes affecting higher education. We are deeply troubled by the increased market based approach to education. We are especially troubled with higher education when students are treated as potential consumers instead of the actors in social development. This approach often leads to the curriculum being adapted to favor the labor market at the cost of humanities.

5. We believe that the role of education goes far beyond creating trained employees and employers for the labor market but has the important role in social development in educating students to be full well rounded citizens. We believe that the public sector depends upon the formation of students that take into account the principals of a holistic and integral education.

6. We are also deeply concerned by the growing trend in the privatization of the educational system. We are especially concerned that the World Trade Organization has listed Education as one of the 12 tradable service sectors. We affirm the Joint Declaration on Higher Education and the General Agreement on Trade in Services by a number of university associations asserting that:

"Higher education exists to serve the public interest and is not a "commodity", a fact which WTO Member States have recognized through UNESCO and other international or multilateral bodies, conventions, and declarations . The mission of higher education is to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole by: educating highly qualified graduates able to meet the needs of all sectors of human activity."[iii]

7. We believe that education cannot be treated or seen as a product to be bought and sold on the open market. In addition to negative impacts on the curriculum, privatization also risks violating the rights of people to higher education on the basis of merit as apposed to economic status. This is guaranteed in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

8. The privatization of educational institutions raises the cost of education to a level that many students cannot afford. In recent years, we have witnessed powerful examples of students reacting strongly to increasing tuition at public universities. Most notably in 2000, thousands of students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) held a nine-month sit-in shutting down the university, which in turn hindered an important part of Mexico's public sector. Similar strikes and protests against tuition increases and the privatization of universities have taken place in many other parts of the world.

9. The privatization of universities and the increase of tuition without broad scholarship programs often denies students their human right to access to higher education. With more than one billion people living on less than 1 dollar a day, even minimal tuition denies potential students access to education. Because of the rising cost of education, many students in all parts of the world are forced to work while taking part time courses. As a result, numerous students take up to ten years to complete their higher education programs, delaying the time when they can contribute to society as educated persons.

10. We recognize that many state sponsored institutions may not provide the best quality of education when compared to private universities. The solution for this should not be to give up on the state sponsored institutions in favor of private universities, but it should be to find ways to make public institutions of higher education more effective. An important part in making public education more effective is to fight corruption at all levels.

11. We support the principals agreed upon at the 1998 UNESCO World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century demonstrating vision and action that highlights the important role of the state making pubic education more effective:

"The funding of higher education requires both public and private resources. The role of the state remains essential in this regard.

(a) The diversification of funding sources reflects the support that society provides to higher education and must be further strengthened to ensure the development of higher education, increase its efficiency and maintain its quality and relevance. Public support for higher education and research remains essential to ensure a balanced achievement of educational and social missions.

(b) Society as a whole must support education at all levels, including higher education, given its role in promoting sustainable economic, social and cultural development. Mobilization for this purpose depends on public awareness and involvement of the public and private sectors of the economy, parliaments, the media, governmental and non-governmental organizations, students as well as institutions, families and all the social actors involved with higher education."[iv]

12. We understand the need for partnerships between the public and private sector when addressing higher education. However, we strongly believe that these partnerships should not inhibit public educational institutions by reducing the provisions of education to students, or limiting the organization of research on behalf of society.

13. We believe that private institutions of higher education are also important for the society, but they should not be seen as the solution to overcoming the lack of resources of the state which fund public institutions. Unfortunately, private institutions are too expensive for many people. As quality education should not be limited to those who can afford it, private universities should work with the public institutions to help ensure all members of society have access to higher education.

14. To help make public education, especially higher education, more effective we encourage the Commission and its members to:

- keep in mind the importance of education, particularly higher education, as part of the public sector,
- promote and protect the human rights of students to have access to higher education based on merit and not the ability to pay. No economical or other form of discrimination can be accepted,
- honor the international agreements made on education, especially the Dakar Framework For Action and the UNESCO World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action,
- to approach privatization of any public service cautiously and with the consultation of NGOs and larger elements of the civil society,
- encourage responsible and creative partnerships between public sector educational institutions and the private sector that do not limit the quality of education and research merely according to the economical and liberal market needs,
- help raise public awareness of the importance of state funding and support for education, from the primary to higher education level,
- find creative ways to support public universities in developing countries that maintains the quality of the education.

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[i] UNESCO World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action Draft, 1998.

[ii] The World Education Forum Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000. #6.

[iii] *Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, American Council on Education,* European University Association (EUA), and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), Joint Declaration on Higher Education and the General Agreement on Trade in Services. 28 September 2001.

[iv] UNESCO World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, 1998. Article 14.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: improving public-sector effectiveness

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Social Workers, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2004/1.

04-20493 (E) 290104

On this day we submit the following statement on improving public sector effectiveness from the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). IFSW is a global organization striving for social justice, human rights and social development through the development of social work, best practices and international cooperation between social workers and their professional organizations. IFSW links professional social workers around the world with national organizations in 78 countries representing the voice of almost half a million social workers around the globe.

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.[1] It is from this frame of reference that we offer the following points for consideration to improving public sector effectiveness through well thought out and pragmatic program development.

Ethics and Human Rights - Only a caring and integral system of social development can facilitate human development and improve the quality of life. The process of social transformation has to be embodied in principles of social justice and human rights. Both government and private sector participation in social development has to be guided by social ethics of respect for people, principles of justice in the distribution of social benefits, rights and entitlement, power, status and opportunities, all guided by the concept of the common good.

Citizen Participation - The citizens and their participation in the development process have to be an integral part of social development. The reasons for involving citizens are many. Without doubt, participation itself is a rightful goal of the development process, it is a means towards the achievement of ends, and it restores the meaningful human interaction that is missing in contemporary society. We urge, therefore, leaders and organizers to understand the connection between democratic, collective decision-making and the realization of such human values as self-determination and empowerment.

A Participatory Model - A participatory model of development has to be established; everyday people in low-wealth communities should not be the target of the social development projects, but rather they should the people who determine, drive, and control the entire development process. Social development starts from the assumption that marginalized and low-income people best understand the problems they face and how to solve them. Development starts with the recognition of social needs and the organization of society to meet them. Governments and private sector organizations have a key role to play in increasing the needs of their constituencies. Before any program implementation, it is necessary, therefore, to engage in participatory and stakeholder research in which individuals, families and community members study issues and conditions that directly affect their lives. The goal of this work is social transformation and improvement in the lives of stakeholders through research, education and action.

[1] International Federation of Social Workers, 2000.

Partnership Building - The value of partnership is undeniable. Organizations today operate in a field with others who share community location, target population, issues and funding sources. Organizations can increase their effectiveness by making the best use of these connections. This contributes to building and sustaining bridges that maximize the resources available to deliver services. Partnerships allow groups to pursue bigger targets on a larger scale, address power inequities, shape public ideology, and build solutions to complex problems together. Partnership helps develop a common language and ideology, which shape a collective vision for social change.

In closing, we urge all governments and private sector organizations to take into account the above factors in policy making and organizing. The history of social development is the story of the recognition of effective development strategies. We, as a global non-governmental organization, wish to submit our statement to this forty-second session of the Commission for Social Development, with a view to improving public sector effectiveness through well thought out and pragmatic program development.

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Statement submitted by Congregations of St. Joseph and Franciscans International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Dominican Leadership Conference, Elizabeth Seton Federation, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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HIV/AIDS is not just a health issue, but a global problem that is setting back decades of development gains and constitutes a veritable threat to human security. Noting that "**less than 5 per cent of those who could benefit from antiretroviral treatment have access to the drugs**" (Report of the Secretary General on the "Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Progress towards implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS" P.8. A/58/184), the above named non-governmental organizations, members of the NGO Working Group on HIV/AIDS, have prepared specific recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the public sector in addressing this urgent challenge.

We believe that the **"3 X 5" initiative**, with the goal of treating 3 million people infected with HIV/AIDS with antiretroviral drugs by 2005, is possible if governments have the political will to direct their energies and resources to realising this goal. This is a social development issue which engages the public sector. WHO is offering support structures to enable the health systems to respond effectively in implementing the programme. NGOs have already experience and development models which demonstrate it is indeed a possibility to significantly roll-back the HIV/AIDS by 2005. With a concerted effort of all groups, and very specific steps to meet the 3X5 goal, we make the following recommendations.

At the ICASA meeting (International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa) in Nairobi the month of September 2003 UNAIDS brought together for a consultation officials from national coordinating bodies and relevant ministries of African nations, major funding mechanisms, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and the private sector. They agreed on the importance of:

1) linkages between national HIV/Action Frameworks and poverty-reduction and development frameworks, including the MDGs;

2) engagement of civil society and the private sector in delivery of services, while retaining adequate capacity in the public sector;

3) rationalising drug procurement to ensure the lowest pricing, assured quality and continuity in supply;

4) national AIDS authority as an overarching coordinating body and policy leader.

At the same ICASA meeting WHO launched its **"3 x 5" Initiative** which has as its aim to assure the treatment of 3 million people living with HIV/AIDS with antiretroviral drugs by the year 2005.

We agree with the leadership of WHO that this effort of treating 3 million persons with ARVs by the year 2005 is possible.

Successful pilot programs carried out by Doctors without Borders in eleven countries give strong evidence for the grounds of this hope. Their project in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape, South Africa demonstrates:

1) ARV therapy can be safely and effectively used in resource poor areas;

2) Management of ARV therapy can be easier and more economic in the long run than of persons living with AIDS not on therapy;

3) The approach to AIDS bolsters the entire health system by easing the need for hospitalisation and treatment of opportunistic infections;

4) The positive effect of treatment gives sufferers hope and encourages others to willingly be tested;

5) By improving the quality of life of persons living with AIDS and extending their life, they can remain part of the productive work force and their children are spared from becoming orphans.

We, too, are convinced that the experience is replicable.

According to Doctors without Borders, after the introduction of the widespread use of ARVs in Brazil in 1996, the incidence of AIDS dropped 50% between the years 1996-99, and the government saved an estimated $472 million otherwise needed for hospitalisation and treatment of persons with opportunistic infections in 1997-99.

Leonard S. Rubenstein, executive director of Physicians for Human Rights, has clearly stated, "Our analysis shows that there is no reason to be sceptical that widespread treatment for HIV/AIDS can be administered, despite the health infrastructure deficits in many poor countries, particularly in Africa. We have found that many components necessary to jumpstart HIV/AIDS treatment are already in place. What is needed now is a firm commitment by the world to fund programs that prevent and treat the greatest public health crisis of our time. It is time for the international community to commit itself to making the WHO goal a reality."

We also, however, noted in the report of the Secretary General ("Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Progress towards implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS" A/58/184), "Financing trends still suggest that global funding for HIV/AIDS programmes will **fall far short of the estimated $10.5 billion required annually by 2005 . . . And almost $15 billion by 2007.** To finance the global response needed to ensure achievement of the Declaration's future commitments, annual funding for HIV/AIDS programmes must increase three fold over current levels by 2005, and five fold by 2007" (P.1, 50, 59i)

For these reasons, the NGO Working Committee on HIV/AIDS recommends that governments direct their energies and resources to realising the "3X5" goal. It is possible to reverse the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in keeping with the Millennium Declaration.

Policy recommendations

A. To developing countries

- Governments of countries with high incidence of HIV/AIDS should endorse and promote the WHO 3X5 Initiative.

- To improve the health services in the public sector, those same governments should optimise those services offered by WHO to facilitate the realization of the "3x5" Initiative by:

  1) Encouraging the adoption of the simplified, standardised treatment guidelines published by WHO on 1st December 2003;

  2) Using the AIDS Drug and Diagnostic Facility, established by WHO, to assist in the advantageous purchase of necessary drugs, especially ARVs;

  3) Studying the eligibility of sector personnel to benefit from the emergency expansion by WHO of training and capacity development for health professionals to deliver simplified and standardised antiretroviral treatment.

- Governments should foster greater collaboration between the public sector and NGOs in order to provide their populations in need with ARVs and coordinate a national strategy to address the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

B. To industrialised countries

- Governments should honour their pledges to the Global Fund and incrementally increase their investment in global human security.

- Governments should seriously consider the International Financing Facility proposed by the UK to obtain the greatest benefit as soon as possible.

- Creditor governments should actively negotiate "debt swaps" so that debtor countries burdened with domestic health crises can redirect into their health budgets what they need now for the service of debts. This would have a significant impact on country's ability to improve the effectiveness of the public sector. At the High Level Dialogue during the General Assembly meeting on HIV/AIDS in September 2003 President Olusegun Obasanjo stated that Nigeria had to pay out in servicing its debt eight times what was needed for the health services and the country could currently only afford 6.4% of the national budget for health.

- Encourage the private sector to be open to initiatives such as the one brokered in September 2003 by the Clinton Foundation in favour of drastically reducing the cost of ARVs to countries in greatest need.

Conclusion

Civil society has been very deeply touched by seeing the human face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is increasingly alarmed that more is not getting done, especially in directing resources to the Global Fund, in order to reverse this terrible plague of our time. It is a dramatic example of how social development cannot be fostered without economic inputs. But we are also heartened to see how public pressure and concerted efforts have greatly reduced the cost of antiretroviral drugs, which offer hope to millions around the globe. WHO and Doctors without Borders both believe that the possibility to redress this situation is now within reach. We ask governments to ensure that the public sector seize this moment to become a more effective channel of hope for the world's affected population, especially the poor and vulnerable groups who depend upon it.

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Statement submitted by Congregations of St. Joseph, Franciscans International and World Association of Girls Guides and Girl Scouts, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Child Welfare League of America, Elizabeth Seton Federation, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation and Lutheran World Federation, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

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As the future generation, young people have constant—often untapped—energy and passion to care and improve their environment. Youth NGOs, networks, and caucuses constantly consider issues surrounding water, and for this statement on priority theme improving public sector effectiveness, we choose to focus on the public sectors responsibility for water provision. This statement comes from a youth perspective, drafted by members of the NGO Committee on Youth in New York, with consultation of young people around the world via online networks, and with input from the recent World Youth Congress in Morocco.

Recognizing that the public sector provides over ninety percent of the water that is available to people around the world, that the public sector is a safety net for those who cannot afford the daily costs of living, and that the world's sources of water are rapidly diminishing;

Recognizing that Target 10 of the Millennium Development Goals requires halving by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation;

Recognizing that the World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond cites ten priority areas for youth involvement, and three of them—hunger and poverty, health, and environment—demand efficient use of water;

Recognizing that access to clean drinking water is a necessary condition for the eradication of poverty, which is a priority for the Division of Social Policy and Development;

Recognizing that as water will become a key source of conflict in the future, it is imperative to preserve and conserve all water resources, especially in light of rapid population growth;

We recommend that:

- Water should be declared a human right by the General Assembly. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has already declared that access to clean water is a human right.

- Privatized systems still must have community input. Most foreign direct investment goes to large-scale projects which do not allow for local participation. Water arrangements in Porto Alegre in Brazil and Dhaka in Bangladesh provide examples of participatory and co-operative water management that is publicly owned and efficient.

    - As outlined in Paragraph 18.34 of Agenda 21, all states should encourage youth to get involved in national and community water management. We encourage local youth councils to take part in their community management practices. Educating more marginalized citizens—like young people and women—has proven to strengthen community water management systems.

- Good governance and accountability must go hand in hand with privatization. Private companies bring in financial resources that developing nations could not otherwise muster, but access to clean water for people should not depend solely on their purchasing power.

- One of the dangers of privatization is that conservation is not seen as profitable. The profit motive that drives private companies often conflicts with the public interest and can lead to dangerous logic such as -- reducing consumption reduces profits.

- Periodic evaluation and checks and balances on privatized systems are essential. So far, there are few "best practices" in privatization that have worked to benefit people. The city of Atlanta recently canceled its 20-year contract with Suez due to poor water quality and higher than projected cost after just four years. If powerful cities like Atlanta cannot get a good deal, how will lesser developed nations fare? A recent careful evaluation of the consequences of the privatization of water in the Larger

Metropolitan Area of Manila (Philippines) completely confirm the problems of higher costs and poor water quality and adds the problem of poor access.

- Educational water initiatives, particularly those targeted to youth in developing countries should continue to receive prominence as a top global priority. Coinciding with the forthcoming Decade for Education on Sustainable Development, the public sector should create programs to educate teachers on conservation and effective water management. We encourage the public sector to provide education on water conservation to students and youth as well as the general public through formal and non formal education.

- Fulfill international financing promises. To strengthen public sectors around the world, developed nations need to allocate 0.7% GDP for ODA as agreed. This money should be used to build and strengthen the efficiency of the public sector in water provision.

    - Debt servicing significantly competes with the adequate funding of the public sector. Canceling and negotiating debts by providing innovative alternatives to meet commitments are necessary so that governmental resources are used to advance social well being instead of international financial organizations.

- Access to safe water has direct public health affects in terms of hygiene and sanitation. The majority of people in underdeveloped countries use unhygienic latrines resulting in health and environmental hazards. In order to improve the public health condition it is necessary to:

    (1) provide pure drinking water, when necessary setting Arsenic free tube wells and create safe water reservoirs;

    (2) encourage safe sanitation by supplying low cost materials to build sanitary latrines;

    (3) undertake national motivation campaigns to promote public health awareness in hygiene and existing health care facilities;

    (4) engage young people in public health campaigns by providing them with short term training and basic equipment;

    (5) promote the employment of young people in the water and sanitation sector as trainers, awareness workers, project developers and entrepreneurs;

    (6) facilitate technical and other assistance to youth groups trained in health and hygiene.

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Item 3 (b) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Statement submitted by the Foundation for the Rights of the Family, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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"The goals and objectives of social development require continuous efforts to reduce and eliminate major sources of social distress and instability for the family and for society ....."
(Copenhagen Declaration paragraph A.20, World Summit for Social Development 5-12 March 1995)

"Helping the family in its supportive, educating and nurturing roles in contributing to social integration ....."
(Copenhagen Programme of Action paragraph 81, World Summit for Social Development, 5-12 March 1995)

"Recognize that the family is the basic unit of society and that it plays a key role in social development and is a strong force of social cohesion and integration ....."
(Twenty-fourth Special Session of the General Assembly, "Further initiatives for social development", paragraph 56, Geneva 26 June-1 July 2000)

THE FAMILY AS CARE-GIVER

It is a known fact that social expenditure increases at a greater speed than the gross national product; and that families, being closer to the problems affecting their members, can better solve them and assume full responsibilties through a shared solidarity.

The family, a sensitive issue in every society, is the first and most important socializing institution, where shelter and security are to be found when difficulties arise. It is through the family that family members become integrated into community life.

The manifold functions that the family naturally performs is not only of paramount importance to its individual members bult also to the society at large. The role and functions of the family cannot be seen as exclusively private concerns but rather as public matter in constant interaction with demographic, cultural, political, legal and economic phenomena.

The family exists in all culture in different behaviours and patterns, and in each culture it represents an essential component in the life of its members. The presence of the family is a precondition for the growth of individuals, just as its absence is often the cause of a destabilizing void.

THE FAMILY AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Public sector effectiveness is driven by the relationship between invested resources and the results obtained.

The resources are diverse and particularly of an economic and human character.The results are intended to reflect the dimension of the impingement of public policies on the diagnosis and solution of social needs. An example of an effective public sector is one that uses the taxes collected to solve social problems.

There is a close relationship between the solution of social problems and the family as a social group. The family is an important social agent because:

- Future citizens are raised and developed by receiving health and nutrition care as well as education within the family.

- Families take responsibility for the problems involved in the incorporation of youth to the labour market and support the significant economic cost of professional training (via universities and/or technical schools) and the permanence of unemployed sons and daughters in the household.

- The relationship between parents and children is decisive in situations of crisis (i.e. delinquency, drug-addiction, unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS).

- Most families provide care and assistance for the elderly, especially in the case of permanent incapacities.

All the above show that the public sector, thanks to families in their care-giving role, can be effective with the same or fewer resources. As a matter of fact, the reduction of social services provided by the welfare state is nowadays an increasing trend owing to economic recession (see the examples of France and Germany, among others).

Therefore, children, youth and disabled and elderly family members, all benefit from a readily available network parallel to the State, with considerable savings on resources for the State.

A DECLARATION ON THE ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY

Societies all over the world recognize and assign a number of societal functions, responsibilities – and corresponding rights – to the family. In many instances, these are stated in national constitutions and laws, whereas in others they are informally recognized through traditions and social norms.

There is, however, an unbalance between the attention centered on the individual in United Nations Declarations, Conventions, Covenants and Conferences, and the low profile afforded to the family.

The family, as a social group, constitutes by itself a situation entitled to juridical protection. This is why the procreative, educational and socializing functions — the sole responsibility of families — should be protected through a declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of the family.

Such rights of the family – without distinction as to race, language, culture, religion, political or other opinions – are, among others, the right to:

Social protection; privacy and security; independence and autonomy; the transmission of certain moral and cultural values; a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of family members; housing; health and social security; educational systems and institutions.

These family rights should not enter into conflict with those of family members – in particular the hard-won rights of women – but, on the contrary, should complement individual rights for the full development of family members.

The consideration of these family rights is important because it is in the family – "the natural and fundamental group unit of society" – where we are really conscious of having a name and an identity, where we share our most intimate feelings and soothe the anxiety caused by the problems of our complex society.

A declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of the family would be an important feature of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and a reminder for further mainstreamed action on behalf of the family in the plans and programmes of the United Nations.

We would, therefore, suggest to this Commission for Social Development that an open-ended group be created for the purpose of working out a declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of the family.

Such a group could extract from national laws, international instruments and existing draft declarations and charters, provisions on the family as a basis for the articulation of such a Declaration, a project already referred to by the General Assembly in operative paragraph 20 of its resolution 47/237 of 8 October 1993, and mentioned in past sessions of this Commission by a number of Delegations.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Statement submitted by Soroptimist International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and European Union of Women, Foundation for the Rights of the Family, International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, International Council of Psychologists, International Council on Alcohol and Addictions, International Kolping Society, and Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students), non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2004/1.

04-20486 (E) 290104

We the undersigned international non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council,

* * * * * * * * * * *

Recognize

"that the family is the basic unit of society and that it plays a key role in social development and is a strong force of social cohesion and integration. In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of family exist. Further recognize that equality and equity between women and men and respect for the rights of all family members are essential for family well-being and for society at large, and promote appropriate actions to meets the needs of families and their individuals members, particularly in the areas of economic support and provision of social services. Greater attention should be paid to helping the family in its supporting, educating and nurturing roles, to the causes and consequences of family disintegration, and to the adoption of measures to reconcile work and family life for women and men."(Twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, "Further initiatives for social development", para. 56, Geneva 26 June-1 July 2000)"

Recall that :

"Helping the family in its supporting, educating and nurturing roles in contributing to social integration should involve: (a) Encouraging social and economic policies that are designed to meet the needs of families and their individual members, especially the most disadvantaged members, with particular attention to the care of children; (b) Insuring opportunities for family members to understand and meet their social responsibilities; (c) Promoting mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation within the family and within society; (d) Promoting equal partnership between women and men in the family." (World Summit for Social Development, Programme of Action, para. 80, Copenhagen 1995)

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In the modern world, society is made up of a complex set of relationships; among them the family should be conceived as a very unique relationship based on equity, reciprocity and respect between genders and generations, law and custom.

Families come in many forms and varieties, and there is change over the life cycle of individual families. A family-friendly society is one that recognizes the diversity of family forms and respects the unique conditions, benefits and problems each family experiences in the execution of its functions.

There is no simple view of the family, nor can there be a universally applicable definition. Throughout history and in differents parts of the world, many types of families exist, with pronounced variations in their structures. New and divergent family forms are constantly evolving. This diversity is a faithful reflection of the cultural pluralism of the individuals that constitute society.

The relative strength of a nation or society depends largely on the strength of the family. What occurs in families affects the whole of society and viceversa. Most countries still rely on families to provide the basic safety net to care for its members. Because of the bonding involved, humans are best cared for by those who know and love them.

In providing care for the weaker and most vulnerable members – children, disabled, old and sick people – the family carries out a crucial societal function. Families are the main providers of basic services such as adequate food, shelter, clothing and supportive interaction as well as being the source of human capital for society.

We, therefore, urge that:

Families, being expert in their own affairs, should be enabled to be full and active partners in decision-making, policy formulation and the design and evaluation of public services and should be assisted and encouraged to fulfil their responsibilities.

Policy makers should be aware of the state of family functioning in their national societies. The detection of the ability, or inability, of families to carry out their functions is a pragmatic and thus valuable approach to identifying unmet needs and isolating specific targets for intervention.

Policies and programmes designed for family members should focus attention on the fact that families are units with their own dynamics and are primary resources in meeting the needs of such groups; to the extent that such policies and programmes do not take into account this fact, they are prone to failure.

The increasing employment of women and the emerging new roles of men are major changes with regard to family responsibilities. The involvement of the father in family functions, as well as the reconciliation of work and family life, should be identified as an important issue to be further developed.

World attention should be focused on the important role played by families especially in the care of those affected by HIV/AIDS and on what can be done to decrease the spread of the virus in order to prevent the erosion of the family unit.

We, hence, expect:

That policy-makers at all levels, in focusing on family concerns, will develop an approach to social development which would synthetize and integrate diverse issues, in an interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach.

That families, as a legitimate focus of social policy, will be placed on the agenda and included in the **multi-year programme of work 2002-2006 of the Commission for Social Development**, and that long-term goals will be set after the celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in those plans and programme of action.

That the General Assembly of the United Nations, in recognition of the tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004, give priority to continue funding for family issues within the Secretariat of the United Nations, which is essential to maintaining important networks of government, International and Civil Society Organisations, involved in strengthening families.

That the possibility of the documentation of world-wide institution building endeavours, including those organized by civil society organizations, to conmemorate the tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, is envisaged.